

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 227867
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:MDRAPER:CF
APPROVED BY S:THE SECRETARY
NEA - MR SAUNDERS
S/S-O:TREYNDERS
EUR MR. GOODBY

-----019170 081720Z /73

O P 081613Z SEP 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 227867

EXDIS//FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS, SY, LE, GW

SUBJECT: LEBANON SITUATION: VISIT OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT TO
GERMANY

1. FYI. RECENT EXCHANGES WITH FRG REPRESENTATIVES (SUCH AS
DAMASCUS 5173 AND 5204, BONN 15877) SUGGEST THAT, ALTHOUGH
THE MFA APPEARS TO SHARE U.S. CONCERNS OVER THE DETERIORA-
TING LEBANESE SITUATION, THE FRG AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS HAS
RECEIVED ONLY VERY MILD INSTRUCTIONS FROM BONN AND INTENDED
TO SEE JOUAJATI RATHER THAN A MORE SENIOR SYRIAN OFFICIAL.
SINCE THE GERMANS ALSO HAVE INDICATIONS THE SYRIANS MAY
BE CONSIDERING RESORT TO A POLICY

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OF FORCIBLE DISARMAMENT OF THE MARONITE MILITIA IT WOULD
SEEM ALL THE MORE :SSENTIAL FRG MAKE FIRMER REPRESENTATIONS.
TRYING TO BRING THE MILITIAS UNDER CONTROL BY MILITARY
MEANS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BRING ABOUT ISRAELI MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT IN SOME FORM. FORTHCOMING VISIT OF ASSAD TO
FRG WILL PROVIDE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO BRING GERMAN CON-
CERN HOME TO ASSAD. END FYI.

2. PLEASE, THEREFORE, GET IN TOUCH WITH GENSCHER TO DELIVER THE FOLLOWING POINTS ON MY BEHALF:

-- THE PRESIDENT AND I HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATION OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION AND THE CONTINUING CYCLE OF FIGHTING BETWEEN SYRIAN FORCES AND THE CHRISTIAN MARONITE MILITIAS. THE CANDID EXCHANGES BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON AND SYRIAN ATTITUDES HAVE BEEN MOST HELPFUL, AND I AM GRATEFUL THAT YOUR AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS AIMED AT CALMING THE SITUATION.

-- WE HAVE BEEN DOING OUR BEST OVER THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO URGE RESTRAINT AND PATIENCE UPON THE ISRAELIS IN ALL WAYS, INCLUDING THE SENDING OF MILITARY SUPPLIES TO THE CHRISTIAN FORCES, BUT THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT THEY ARE WILLING TO DO. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN ASSURED REPEATEDLY BY AUTHORITATIVE SYRIANS THAT SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON IS SIMPLY ONE OF ESTABLISHING SECURITY, WE REMAIN UNSURE OF REAL SYRIAN OBJECTIVES, NOW OR IN THE LONGER RUN. UNCERTAINTY OR LACK OF CLARITY AS REGARDS SYRIAN INTENTIONS CONSEQUENTLY ADD TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF MAJOR MISCALCULATIONS BY THE ISRAELIS. IT ALSO ADDS TO APPREHENSIONS AMONG ORDINARY LEBANESE CITIZENS WITH NO PARTICULAR AFFILIATION TO ANY OF THE MARONITE MILITIAS
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BUT WHO HAVE FLED IN GREAT NUMBERS FROM THE SCENE OF RECENT CONFRONTATIONS.

-- WE HAVE THEREFORE URGED THE SYRIANS--REPEATEDLY AND IN VERY FIRM WAYS--TO TAKE UNILATERAL STEPS TO BRING AN END TO THE FIGHTING THROUGH A REAL CEASEFIRE AND STANDFAST. WE HAVE URGED THEM TO FIND WAYS TO LESSEN TENSIONS THROUGH DISENGAGEMENT FROM FLASH POINTS AND BY PLACING LEBANESE ARMY AND SECURITY UNITS IN THESE AREAS IN LIEU OF SYRIAN FORCES. WE HAVE URGED THEM TO MAKE THEIR INTENTIONS KNOWN MORE CLEARLY IN WAYS THAT WOULD EASE APPREHENSIONS AND REDUCE THE RISK OF MISCALCULATIONS.

-- IF THE SYRIANS ARE CONSIDERING A POLICY OF FORCIBLY DISARMING THE MARONITE MILITIAS, AS THEY HAVE MENTIONED TO FRG REPRESENTATIVES, THIS WOULD BE A MOST SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT. IT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE A GOOD THING FOR LEBANON IF THE PRESENCE OF MILITIAS WAS NO LONGER ENCOURAGED BY THE INDEPENDENT MARONITE LEADERS, AND THE CHRISTIAN AND OTHER COMMUNITIES COULD LOOK TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND A STRONG NATIONAL ARMY FOR PROTECTION, BUT SUCH A POSSIBILITY IS FAR DISTANT. IT SEEMS COMPLETELY

UNLIKELY TO US THAT THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT DISARMAMENT OF THESE MILITIAS WHILE THE PALESTINIANS IN THE COUNTRY REMAIN HEAVILY ARMED AND ABLE TO THROW THEIR OWN MILITARY WEIGHT AROUND. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN AN EASING OF TENSIONS AND A LASTING CEASEFIRE, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WOULD REDUCE THEIR VISIBILITY AND REFRAIN FROM NEW PROVOCATIONS.

-- IT IS TROUBLING ALSO THAT SOME REPEAT SOME OF THE MARONITE LEADERS APPARENTLY ARE READY TO START NEW CAMPAIGNS OF PROVOCATIONS IN A WAY WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT, FIRST, HEAVY SYRIAN RETALIATION, AND THEN ISRAELI MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN AID OF THE CHRISTIANS. IT IS

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CLEAR TO US THAT THE ISRAELIS DO NOT WANT TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED THAN THEY ARE NOW, AND WE BELIEVE THEY HAVE COUNSELLED MODERATION WITH THEIR CONTACTS IN LEBANON, BUT THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT HESITATE TO TAKE SOME STEPS IF THE SYRIANS MAKE FURTHER MOVES INTO THE CHRISTIAN HEARTLAND OR IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SMALL PORTS WHERE MARONITE FORCES CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SUPPLIES FROM THE OUTSIDE.

-- THERE IS ALSO A MAJOR DANGER THAT ISRAELI RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT OVERFLYING LEBANON WILL BE CHALLENGED BY SYRIAN AIRCRAFT OR NEW SYRIAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSES IN LEBANON.

-- I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STRESS WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD THE NEED FOR SERIOUS ACTION TO REVERSE PRESENT TRENDS IN LEBANON AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVING TOWARD A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A MILITARY SOLUTION THERE. CHRISTOPHER

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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APPROVED BY IO/UNA:JFTEFFT

S/S-O:RSNIDER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0000

S E C R E T STATE 227867

EXDIS, FOR AMB. YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 227867 SENT ACTION BONN INFO
DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM AND BEIRUT SEP 08.

QUOTE: S E C R E T STATE 227867

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UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 sep 1978
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Enclosure: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1500066
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANON SITUATION: VISIT OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT TO GERMANY
TAGS: PINT, IS, SY, LE, GE
To: BONN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d42b1054-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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